

THE INDEPENDENT

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## The view from inside Kuwait

*From a British citizen in Kuwait*

Sir, I am a British citizen and a warden for the Embassy who has been living and working in Kuwait. My wife and son are still here, and we are still living in the same place. There has, however, been a marked deterioration in living conditions and the morale of those living here.

Our lives are spent in an endless attempt to avoid detection by the Iraqis. My family recently had a close escape when Iraqi civilians broke into the ground floor of our villa in an attempt to steal possessions belonging to our (absentee) Kuwaiti landlord. On this occasion, we were able to phone our Kuwaiti neighbours who came round and prevented the Iraqis from looting.

Food supplies are very low. Until recently we had been able to conserve stocks, as the Kuwaiti resistance were able to provide us with as much food as we consumed. This practice altered after food stores in Kuwait were looted by the Iraqi military. Some people have less than two weeks supply of provisions with little hope of getting more. It would be ironic for Westerners to have to turn themselves in to the Iraqis, in order not to starve, after spending months trying to avoid capture.

Our morale is extremely low and we are beginning to feel forgotten by all but our families and friends. However, this does not represent any victory for the Iraqi regime, whom we have learned to detest and whose downfall we would welcome. Even so, we are aware that as Westerners we are not treated as badly by the Iraqis as other nationalities.

The treatment of the Kuwaitis by the Iraqis is atrocious and breaks all international laws and conventions. Electrocuting, burnings, beatings and the use of chemicals are all part of the Iraqi interrogation techniques. Executions of Kuwaiti civilians occur every day. The Iraqis often take Kuwaitis back to their homes for execution, and before killing them fire shots in the air in order to attract the attention of people living nearby. In this manner, the Iraqis ensure that the executions are witnessed by friends and families of the victims.

The people that are killed are not criminals. By profession they are doctors, scientists, students, teachers, businessmen - an ordinary cross-section of the population distinguished only by their bravery in staying on in their country and refusing to accept its annexation by the Iraqis.

They are being killed in order to reduce the morale of other Kuwaitis who have remained and

who refuse to accept the Iraqi occupation of their country. The Kuwaitis that remain are in despair. Their country has been destroyed, their food supplies are inadequate; their children have no schools and their old people no medical facilities.

The outside world calls for a "peaceful" or "diplomatic" solution to the crisis. Everyone in Kuwait disagrees and believes a "military" solution is required. Peaceful and diplomatic efforts, to date, have resulted in hundreds of Kuwaitis being tortured and killed in some of the most horrible ways possible. Many others will be killed before this is resolved. Other nationalities, including British, are dying because of the lack of access to medical facilities and the stress brought on by the Iraqi occupation.

If the Iraqis do not withdraw voluntarily from Kuwait, military action will have to be taken eventually. The only tangible results of the peaceful and diplomatic efforts will have been the unnecessary deaths of hundreds of Kuwaitis and some non-Kuwaitis.

The outside world should realise that there is no way out of this crisis for the Iraqi regime and it is just playing for time. Every visit by every politician, diplomat or envoy, prolongs the agony of those of us under Iraqi occupation. How many more "final" diplomatic initiatives do there have to be before the rest of the world realises there is no pattern, logic or possible compromise in the Iraqi position? They are doomed.

If it were Westerners, rather than Kuwaitis, who were being tortured and executed, then almost certainly the allies would have taken military action by now. What sort of perverse logic can explain the massive EC outcry against the invasion of the French Ambassador's house by Iraqis, yet the complete and utter silence from the outside world that greeted the Amnesty report on Kuwait?

The blame for this crisis rests squarely on Saddam Hussein's regime, and nothing short of its total removal will bring about a satisfactory conclusion. However, the Western world has compounded this tragedy by its failure to act quickly and decisively. Every day that passes brings more deaths, more hardship and more suffering. It does not bring the Iraqi regime any nearer its end. That will have to be brought about by military action.

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN SMITH

Kuwait  
9 October

*The writer is using a pseudonym.*